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BOOK REVIEWS.

EGOTISM IN GERMAN PHILOSOPHY. By Professor G. Santayana.
 London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.; New York:
 Charles Scribner's Sons. 1916. Pp. 171. Price, 5s. net.

No philosophical writer has happier *aperçus*—or expresses them more incisively—than the author of this brilliant book. Once heard, his phrases—and they are found on every page—are not forgotten: but he has arrived *ex errore per veritatem ad errorem*; the epigram is as true of him as it is of Sohm. For few writers are so inconclusive and so unsystematic; his is a critical, not a constructive, mind. Latin thought is fundamentally sceptical; seldom does it get beyond the question, *Chi lo sa?* Whereas German thought is dogmatic. It replaces systems by systems: “an Amurath an Amurath succeeds.” Professor Santayana represents the Latin genius; and this has now a unique opportunity. In its lower forms, it connects the present world-war with the Reformation—this is the contention of the clerical press; in its higher, with that German philosophy which, in pre-Tractarian Oxford, a University preacher is said to have wished at the bottom of the German Ocean. Professor Santayana, it seems, echoes the wish.

“I am not going to lay hands on my father Parmenides.” In the province of ideas we owe too much to Germany to dismiss her speculative constructions so summarily. “The whole transcendental philosophy, if made ultimate, is false, and nothing but a private perspective.” But what if there is no such thing as an ultimate in speculation, and no finality in thought? In this case the “transcendental” philosophy may be a milestone, momentous and inevitable, on the path of mind. For of thought, as of life, it may be said “Here we have no abiding city.” Our shelters, serviceable as they are, are temporary; we “seek one to come.” Philosophers and pietists alike, while they deny this in words, recognize it in fact; indeed without such recognition neither philosophy nor piety could subsist among men. Each system, as it comes, “thinks itself true, and final; but, in spite of itself, it suggests some next thing.”

Protestantism is uncongenial to the Latin temperament. Professor Santayana has more understanding of, than sympathy

with, it; like Balaam he blesses, even while he comes to curse.

"Protestantism was not a reformation by accident, because it happened to find the Church corrupt; it is a reformation essentially, in that every individual must reinterpret the Bible and the practices of the Church in his own spirit. If he accepted them without renewing them in the light of his personal religious experience, he could never have what Protestantism thinks living religion. German Philosophy has inherited this characteristic; it is not accumulative science that can be transmitted ready made."

This is to say that the one is religion and the other thought. Neither can be vicarious; we must live and think "on our own." And when we are told that, "favourable as Protestantism is to investigation and learning, it is almost incompatible with clearness of thought and fundamental freedom of attitude," we can only reconcile the two statements by remembering that to the classic thought of Greece Reason was a Limit; and that "they see not clearliest who see all things clear." But this is not the Professor's meaning, though it is perhaps the lesson of his very suggestive but somewhat irritating book.

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As a thinker of the present moment, no man could be so well employed in focusing the popular hatred of either party of the belligerents as in enlightening it that we might make the best use of what has happened. One of the crudest causes of this war is no doubt the lack of knowledge between peoples of what they one another are. The author would have been wiser, if he had depicted the supposed English or French characteristics discoverable in German Philosophy as well as the supposed German characteristics discoverable in English or French Philosophy, as it is really possible to do. Or he might have reduced or synthesized all the German characteristics to a more fundamental form—a fundamental form in which both German and non-German peculiarities share, and tend to share still more as they grow. In spite of the fact that the author seems to be fond of the inductive method in dealing with problems, it often happens that he speaks as if he had a "categorical imperative" in his mind which obliges him to interpret, in the light of egotism, any

characteristic whatever that he finds in German Philosophy. Sometimes he is virtually passing judgment on non-German Philosophy no less or even more severely than on German Philosophy. For the qualities responsible for the condemnation are common to both, or are outweighing in non-German Philosophy. For instance, what he meant by "The Breach of Christianity" (Ch. X) or, by "Heathenism" (Ch. XIV), if it were ascertainable in German Philosophy, should be so no less or even more in non-German Philosophy. We have simply to recall to our mind the whole history of thought since the Renaissance. It is rather trivial to point to any particular epitomes such as French Positivism, English Empiricism and Utilitarianism, or American Pragmatism. Apart from the appreciation of the author, directed to his own observation, this observation itself is not always accurate enough. "Platonic idealism spurns the earth and believes in heaven, a form of religion most odious to the Germans. They think this sort of idealism not only visionary but somewhat impious; for their own religion takes the form of piety and affection towards everything homely, imperfect, unstable, and progressive" (p. 16). Does this apply to Kant whom the author takes for one of the most important exponents of German Philosophers? For the fatal weakness of Kant was just in his ascetic and dualistic idealism as well as in his *a priorism* which was the best friend of moral and logical categories and the worst enemy of an empirical improvement. Will it not apply very well to John Stuart Mill or William James or John Dewey, whose primary assets consist just in what Kant and so many German Philosophers are devoid of? Must not the following sentence that "the Germans yearn to pursue the unattainable and encounter the unforeseen" be taken to be the description of Platonic Idealism itself? The author says, "Yet German idealism is a religion of the actual. It rejects nothing in the daily experience of life, and looks to nothing essentially different beyond" (p. 16). Can this be justified in the case of Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy? I quite agree with the author that "One of the chief characteristics of German Philosophy, without which it would melt away, is ambiguity" (p. 17). But the reason why it is so lies, indeed, in the fact that German Idealism is a religion of the *non-actual*; that it rejects *everything* in the daily experience of life, and looks to *something* essentially different beyond. I wish German Idealism could realise a trifle more of the meaning

of the *actual* which was left to English, French, and American genius. What the author in these quotations says may hold true of Goethe. But in that case it means that Goethe was not merely a German but rather a *human* and modern poet-thinker. "To despise the world and withdraw into the realm of mind, as into a subtler and more congenial sphere, is quite contrary to the Idealism of a German transcendentalist. . . . He hates as he would death what another kind of Idealists have called salvation" (pp. 70, 71). This is, however, a message universal to modern thinkers, though different in its more or less accidental attributes. "German Philosophy has a religious spirit, but its alliance with Christianity has always been equivocal and external" (p. 104). If this is so, we are only assured that non-German Philosophy has been even more advanced in that same direction than German Philosophy—a tendency coincident with the stronger originality and insight in the former than in the latter.

On the whole, the limitation of German Philosophy is that it is not based upon the "ego," as a philosophy ought to be. It is rather based on a chimerical whole. Hegel and even Fichte were guilty of this folly. On the other hand, the merit of English, French, and American philosophies is that they are based upon the ego. Their limitation is just the limitation of their ego so that it cannot successfully absorb the whole by means of a proper metaphysics. A philosophy based upon the whole which is not the result of the reflection or of the perfection of the ego will necessarily produce many an evil. It may impose upon us *duty* even at the expense of *end*, or *order* even at the expense of *liberty*. Besides all this, I have been left at least in an agnostic state as to the political insight of the author. I wonder what would be the criticism of the author on *Justice in War-Time* by Bertrand Russell, in which he is bound to be interested. The Germans may be particularly guilty of the drawbacks of nationalism, as the author is keenly aware. The fact remains none the less that other nations also are in urgent need of a drastic reconstruction of their own present conception of nationalism. We had hoped that the author would have given us at least something more suggestive as a universal remedy as well as a universal diagnosis of the world's disease by the way of criticising an aggravated point of the disease. Be that as it may, this volume has not at all failed to show the admirable qualities which we naturally expected of the author. He has shown himself once again as a

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singularly delightful philosophic writer. Amazing lines and passages both in thought and expression abound. Perhaps it is no mere accident that men like Nietzsche and Goethe are treated more brilliantly than some rather technical philosophers. The author himself is undoubtedly one of the poet-thinkers for whose product, especially when and where it is sincere and unbiased, we have several reasons to be thankful. One reason among others is that he is so keenly critical and occasionally even prophetic.

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PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION. By Bertrand Russell.
London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1916. Pp. 250.
Price, 6s. net.

Mr. Russell has written a great book, and its effect will probably be felt long after the political controversies which the War has aroused have been forgotten. He has set himself, as it seems from the choice of subjects dealt with, to express in unacademic language the most fundamental of the new conclusions which those have been driven to make who care to examine the assumptions upon which social belief and practice now rest. The study of principles naturally leads him first to discover what are the beliefs and passions which support the present social system. His book is therefore in part a psychological analysis of the common social attitude of to-day. And by contrast there appears another attitude not common or powerful at present but obvious and important to any eyes which care to see. This other attitude is perhaps expressed as creativeness: it is at least activity rather than acquiescence and it is that activity upon which Mr. Russell lays most emphasis in his suggestions for reconstruction.

Naturally such a book must be very far-reaching in its criticism and very indefinite in its suggested programmes. We cannot have all wisdom in one volume, and it is fundamental to the understanding of Mr. Russell's argument that we should not seek it there. So that if anyone desires to find "difficulties" against new suggestions or "arguments" for old abuses, he may do so without finding himself hampered by Mr. Russell's reasoning. There is much to be said in favour of the state or of property which Mr. Russell has not said; and his form of Syndicalism or his educational programme needs further explanation. There will be many, who, for reasons perhaps unconnected with the intelli-